IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet take-out apparatus comprising:

a sheet-feeding member on which sheets are placed;

an air spout unit to spout out air toward a right or left side of a front portion of said sheets with respect to a taking-out direction of said sheets in order for the front portion of said sheets to separate from each other;

a take-out unit to take out ~~a~~ an uppermost sheet from said sheets in the taking-out direction when the air spouted out maintains the sheets separated from each other; and

a depression member to depress said sheets against said sheet-feeding member from the uppermost sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said sheets with respect to the taking-out direction.

2. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said air spout unit is an air nozzle provided in a vicinity of said take-out unit.

3. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said air spout unit includes first and second air nozzles provided on both sides of the sheets placed on said sheet-feeding member.

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet take-out apparatus comprising:

a sheet feeding member on which sheets are placed;

an air spout unit to spout air toward said sheets placed on said sheet-feeding member in order for the front portion of said sheets to separate from each other;

a take-out unit to take out ~~a~~ an uppermost sheet from said sheets in a predetermined taking-out direction when the air spouted out maintains the sheets separated from each other; and

a depression member to depress said sheets against said sheet-feeding member from the uppermost sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said sheets with respect to the taking-out direction,

wherein said air spout unit includes first, second and third air nozzles spouting out air toward both sides of said sheets, said first and second air nozzles being provided in a vicinity of said take-out unit, said third air nozzle being provided rearwardly of said first and second air nozzles with respect to the taking-out direction.

5. (Currently Amended) A sheet take-out apparatus comprising:

a sheet-feeding member on which sheets are placed;

an air spout unit to spout out air toward a right or left side of a front portion of said sheets with respect to a taking-out direction of said sheets in order for the front portion of said sheets to separate from each other;

a take-out unit to take out ~~a~~ an uppermost sheet from said sheets in the taking-out direction when the air spouted out maintains the sheets separated from each other; and

an air jet nozzle to depress said sheets against said sheet-feeding member from the uppermost sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said sheets with respect to the taking-out direction.

6. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 5, wherein a pointed end of said air jet nozzle is provided on a rear portion of said sheets that is farther from said take-out unit than the center of said sheets placed on said sheet-feeding member.

7. (Currently Amended) A sheet take-out apparatus comprising:

a sheet-feeding member on which sheets are placed;

an air spout unit to spout out air toward a right or left side of a front portion of said sheets with respect to a taking-out direction of said sheets in order for the front portion of said sheets to separated from each other; and

a take-out unit having a take-out rotor to take out a top sheet and a reverse rotation rotor that rotates in reverse with respect to said take-out rotor and returns excessive sheets taken from said sheets to said sheet-feeding member; and

~~a~~ an air depression member to depress said sheets by air against said sheet-feeding member from the top sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said sheets with respect to the taking-out direction when the air spout unit maintains the sheets separate from each other.

8. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said take-out rotor and said reverse rotation rotor each are provided with surfaces in which suction holes are defined to suck a sheet from said sheets.

9. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 8, wherein a friction coefficient of said surface of said take-out rotor is larger than that of said surface of said reverse rotation rotor.

10. (Currently Amended) A sheet take-out apparatus comprising:

a sheet-feeding member on which sheets are placed;

guide members provided on both sides of the sheets placed on said sheet-feeding member to adjust a position of said sheets in a width direction thereof;

an air spout unit to spout out air toward a right or left side of a front portion of said sheets with respect to a taking-out direction of said sheets in order for the front portion of said sheets to separate from each other;

a take-out unit to take out ~~a~~ an uppermost sheet from said sheets in the taking-out direction when the air spouted out maintains the sheets separated from each other; and

~~a~~ an air depression member to depress said sheets by air against said sheet-feeding member from the uppermost sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said sheets with respect to the taking-out direction.

11. (Previously Presented) A sheet take-out apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said air spout unit is attached to said guide members.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of taking out a sheet from stacked sheets comprising:

placing stacked sheets on a sheet-feeding member;

spouting out air toward a right or left side of a front portion of said stacked sheets with respect to a taking-out direction of said sheets in order for the front portion of said sheets to separate from each other;

taking out ~~a~~ an uppermost sheet from said stacked sheets in the taking-out direction when the air spouted out maintains the sheets separated from each other; and

depressing said stacked sheets against said sheet-feeding member from the uppermost sheet on a rear portion of said sheets located behind a central portion of said stacked sheets with respect to the taking-out direction.